

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 203641

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /006 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA TASK FORCE:SEMAKIS

APPROVED BY:NEA:KORN

S/S-O: TWOHIE

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 203641

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD

FOLL REPEAT STATE 203641 ACTION ALL DIPLOMATIC POSTS NIACT
IMMEDIATE JERUSALEM NIACT IMMEDIATE NOUAKCHOTT NIACT IMMEDIATE
OCTOBER 14 QUOTE

NCLAS STATE 203641

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING: MIDDLE EAST

FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS OF DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS
BRIEFING OCT 13, 1973

1. QUOTE AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY: ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS
OCCUPIED A GOOD DEAL OF MY TIME THIS MORNING HAS BEEN MOST
DISTURBING TO US--IT IS THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO GET, AND
TO READ, FALSE REPORTS OF AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN
THE MIDDLE EAST, REMINISCENT OF THE SO-CALLED "BIG LIE"
TECHNIQUE THAT WAS EMPLOYED DURING THE CONFLICT IN 1967,
BEARING DIRECTLY ON THE UNITED STATES.

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I WISH I COULD AVOID THE BUSINESS OF DENYING EACH OF THESE,

WHAT I'D HAVE TO SAY ARE MISCHIEVOUS AND GROUNDLESS REPORTS
AS THEY COME ALONG.

LET ME SAY THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER TO, I GUESS,
PARTICULARLY TWO STORIES THIS MORNING. ONE, THAT A U.S.
AIR FORCE AIRCRAFT WAS INVOLVED IN THE HOSTILITIES IN
SYRIA; AND A SECOND THAT A PHANTOM JET BEARING "USAF," U.S.
AIR FORCE MARKINGS, PILOTED BY AN AMERICAN, WAS

SHOT DOWN FRIDAY OVER DAMASCUS, AND ADD, LASTLY, THAT
THERE IS NO AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIGHTING BY U.S.
MILITARY FORCES OR PERSONNEL.

AND WHAT IS, I SUPPOSE, MOST DISTURBING TO US IS THAT
THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE EMANATING FROM ARAB QUARTERS WHERE
GOVERNMENTS THERE HAVE ASKED THE UNITED STATES ON A
NUMBER OF OCCASIONS TO BE AS HELPFUL AS WE CAN IN AN
EFFORT TO START, OR HAVE STARTED, A NEGOTIATION AMONG
THE PARTIES, ASKING THAT AT THE SAME TIME THAT THEY ARE
VILIFYING US BY THE NATURE OF THESE REPORTS.

Q: I WANT TO GET BACK TO THE REPORTS THIS MORNING OF
THE PHANTOMS, OR OTHER U.S. PLANES INVOLVED. YOU
REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO TWO STORIES RELATING TO AIR
FORCE PLANES, AND YOU AGAIN SAID SPECIFICALLY, NO
AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIGHTING.

A: NO AMERICAN "MILITARY" INVOLVEMENT.

Q: NO AMERICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT. WELL, WOULD YOU
HAVE MADE THAT STATEMENT WITHOUT ASSURANCES FROM THE
PENTAGON THAT THERE WERE NO RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT
INVOLVED? PARTICULARLY NAVAL AIRCRAFT OF THE SIXTH
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FLEET?

A: I HAVE CHECKED THIS AS THOROUGHLY AS IT'S HUMANLY
POSSIBLE TO DO THIS MORNING, AND I THINK I WILL STAND
ON WHAT I HAVE SAID.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE203641
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA TASK FORCE:SEMAKIS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731033/aaaaayhd.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: cunninfx
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19-Nov-2001 by chappeld>; APPROVED <08 FEB 2002 by cunninfx>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING: MIDDLE EAST FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS OF DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING
OCT 13, 1973
TAGS: n/a
To: BEIRUT
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005